This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Narrative of Facts & Circumstances - 1845

C
8324
3075

C 8324.307.5

Harvard College Library

BOUGHT FROM THE
ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY
FUND

BEQUEATHED BY
CAROLINE EUSTIS PEABODY
OF CAMBRIDGE

A

NARRATIVE OF FACTS,

AND

DECLARATION OF FAITH,

DRAWN UP AND ISSUED BY

FRIENDS OF NEW ENGLAND,

ASSEMBLED AT THEIR

YEARLY MEETING,

1845.

WITH

THE EPISTLE OF COUNSEL.

London:
C. GILPIN, 5, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.
1845.

NARRATIVE

OF

FACTS & CIRCUMSTANCES

THAT HAVE TENDED TO PRODUCE A SECESSION FROM

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

IN

NEW-ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING.

LONDON:
C. GILPIN, 5, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.
1845.

C 8324.307.5

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE
ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY
FUND

February 3, 1942

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

NARRATIVE.

It is for the cause of truth, and for the information of those who from the want of a true understanding of the case, are liable to be deceived by unfounded and improper representations, that we feel called upon to set forth the following account of the secession from Friends, that has taken place within this Yearly Meeting.

In order to give a faithful history, it seems necessary to go back several years, and advert to some circumstances that then transpired; and unpleasant as is the duty, we are subjected to the painful necessity of exposing the course of an individual, formerly a minister in unity with us, who has been prominent as a leader in this schism, and, for the same reason, we are induced to state various other causes and circumstances that have tended to produce the secession which we are about to describe.

In the year 1832, John Wilbur was liberated to make a religious visit to Friends in Great Britain and Ireland. While absent on this visit, he wrote a series of Letters relating to the doctrines and practices of the Society of Friends, which were published, having evidently been

written for that purpose, without being submitted to the inspection of any body of the Society authorized to examine such publications; a procedure which he well knew was viewed by our Yearly Meeting as always improper, and contrary to the express provisions of our Discipline. As this publication was made but a short time before his return home, no action was taken in the case until he arrived; when the Meeting for Sufferings, feeling that a dangerous precedent had been set by a Minister, and former member of their body, thought some explanation was called for from him; and they named a committee of three Friends to have an interview with him on the subject; but that there might be no unnecessary exposure, no minute was made in the case. This committee sought an interview with him, and labored in tenderness and love to convince him of the impropriety of departing from the Discipline of his own Yearly Meeting, while travelling as a Minister with the requisite certificates of that Meeting, as well as of the hurtful tendency in an abstract point of view, of encouraging publications on doctrinal subjects, without the previous investigation and approbation of some authorized body of the Society. But so far from giving any satisfaction to this committee, he manifested a disposition to justify himself, and to call in question the correctness of the procedure of the Meeting for Sufferings in the case. After considerable delay and much ineffectual labour, as the publication had received but little circulation in this country, and as a desire was felt to exercise all tenderness and forbearance towards him, the subject was suffered to rest, so far as any official action was concerned. But we have reason to believe that this honest concern, and faithful labour in the case by his brethren, was not received by him in the spirit in which they were offered. A want of that charity, unity, and love, which so become brethren, was painfully observable in his conduct towards many

Friends, so as to cause uneasiness on his account, and to induce individual labour to be extended to him.

It was under the profession of supporting sound doctrines, that he pursued a course, and indulged in a spirit of detraction, tending to injure the religious character of divers Friends in our own and other Yearly Meetings, representing them as unsound in doctrine, and holding views inconsistent with those always held by the Society of Friends. Letters were written and circulated by him having this end in view, and intended to lessen the standing of individuals, and to obstruct their religious labours.

In the autumn of 1837, John Wilbur made a religious visit within the limits of New-York Yearly Meeting; and during the course of this journey he continued to indulge in this detracting spirit, both in speaking and writing, until he produced much exercise with well-concerned Friends,—Ministers, Elders, and others,—among whom he was travelling, and some of them treated with him on this account. In one of the conferences held with him upon this subject, he used the following language: "I consider the course I am taking in respect to the Friend from England and his writings, to be in the line of my religious duty, and this I hold to be more binding upon me than any rules of Discipline."

After his return home from this visit, he continued to manifest the same unwarrantable course, producing much uneasiness in the minds of those friends to whom knowledge of it came, and who felt the importance both of supporting our own Discipline, and of treating other Yearly Meetings with that christian confidence and regard, to which, as bodies in unity with us, they were justly entitled; and tender labor was bestowed on him by different individuals, to induce him to desist from his improper proceedings.

In the 7th month, 1839, a minister and aged elder

sought an interview with him, the progress and result of which are thus described by the latter:

"The manner in which John Wilbur had spoken of a Friend, when about to visit this country as a minister, having the approbation of his friends at home, and by them liberated in the usual way, gave some of his friends concern on his account; and after the friend arrived in this country, John Wilbur being then out on a religious visit to Friends in some parts of the State of New York, continued to manifest his aversion to the friend and to his writings, as I understood. In the course of the following summer, I believe in the 7th month, a friend from New Hampshire called on me to accompany him on a religious visit to the meetings of Friends in South Kingstown Monthly Meeting. I bore him company; and after having dined at John Wilbur's, we asked for a personal and select interview with him; this was readily granted, and the subject of the good order of the Society in reference to the manner in which ministers travelling abroad on religious concerns, in the authority of the Church, ought to treat each other, was brought into view, and contrasted with the course he had pursued while out on a religious visit to Friends in the State of New York. We endeavoured to convince him that his manner of treating the friend above referred to, both in speaking and writing respecting him, was not only contrary to the express scriptural injunction of doing to others as we would that others should do to us, but was likewise contrary to the injunction of our own Discipline. He appeared disposed, and repeatedly attempted to shield himself by alleging that the writings of the friend were unsound. We as often unhesitatingly assured him, that our concern to have an interview with him had no reference to writings, but that our object was to persuade him to refrain from pursuing such a course. The friend was here recommended to us by a meeting with which we were in unity; should he advance any thing unsound in public or in private, or otherwise conduct himself disorderly, he would become a subject, like all other ministers travelling among us, over whom the care of the Society ought to be extended.

"The conversation was open and free, and he was repeatedly enjoined not to blend our concern for him as

having any connection with, or reference to the writings of the friend. And we again assured him that it was a concern growing out of, as we believed, a clear conviction in our own minds that his past course in reference to that individual, would ultimately, if persisted in, be productive of serious loss to himself and injury to the Society.

" It may not be improper here to remark, that I did not converse with an individual member of South Kingstown Monthly Meeting on the subject, that did not manifest regret at the manner in which J. W. was conducting himself towards the minister referred to."

In the following winter, 1839-40, John Wilbur having obtained a certificate from South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, to enable him to visit some of the meetings in this Yearly Meeting, a committee then under appointment from the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, were tenderly concerned on his account, and a few of their number were deputed to have an interview with him previous to his leaving home to enter on this engagement; but failing to effect their object, they addressed to him the following communication, through one of their number. The letter is dated 1 mo. 6, 1840.

" Having written thee a few days ago, and forwarded it by mail, at the request of some of the Select Yearly Meeting's committee, proposing an interview with thee at our house on the fifth inst., the few friends referred to came at the time appointed, but as thou wast not present, —which we readily admitted may have been occasioned by reasonable causes—it was proposed that I should again address a few lines to thee, pointing out in some measure the subjects of concern that induced the committee of the Select Yearly Meeting assembled from various parts of the Yearly Meeting — twelve in number — to seek an interview with thyself as proposed, and named a few friends for this purpose. Such an interview was more desirable than correspondence, and would probably have been further attempted, but from uncertainty of thy being at home, and from the expectation of those friends that were here, of leaving their several homes to-day or to-morrow, to go in a different direction.

"I feel it to be a very delicate situation to be placed in, that of being the instrument to convey the religious impressions and views of the Committee; and probably I should have at once excused myself, had not the committee named me as one of those who were requested to have such interview. If I should be found incorrect, my apology to them and thyself must be, that I was not present with the committee in their deliberations, and have not rightly comprehended their concern; but as I understand the subject, the committee in taking into consideration the state of the Ministers and Elders in this Yearly Meeting, and the duties that devolve upon them as members of the Select Yearly Meeting's Committee, became tenderly regardful of thyself, knowing that thou hadst been liberated by thy Monthly Meeting for the purpose of visiting the Quarterly Meetings, and that thou hadst commenced the fulfilment of thy prospect. And trusting that thou wilt kindly receive the manifestations of their tender regard for thy welfare and that of the church, in bringing into view in this way, a portion of ancient Discipline to which we doubt not thy own judgment and religious experience will readily assent—'That ministers be very tender of one another's reputation, neither giving ear to, nor spreading reports, tending to raise in the minds of others a lessening or dis-esteem of any of the brotherhood. That by circumspect walking in all holiness of life and conversation, they may become living examples of the purity and excellence of the advices they recommend.' This advice was intended, no doubt, for all practically to regard, and it appears to have specially in view those travelling in the ministry; and I understand the committee felt themselves constrained in Christian love to bring this subject before thy view at the present time, from a persuasion that in time past there had not been that circumspection and care on thy part, which are the fruits of that charity that is the Christian's ornament, and the bond of our religious communion; in that as they believe thou hast indulged thyself, and countenanced in others, both in conversation and writing, the saying of many things tending to close up the way in Friends' minds to the reception of the labours of one who like thyself apprehends that he has a religious duty to discharge, and in the order of Society is endeavouring to accomplish

this object. And I am requested to add as the united concern of the committee, and as their advice, that if thou shouldst pursue thy prospect of visiting the Quarterly Meetings, that, for thy own preservation and the harmony and good order of Society, thou wilt be careful to refrain from introducing the subject to any with whom thou mayst associate, and wilt not open the way for others to introduce it. The committee likewise recommend thy omitting to take with thee any of thy correspondence, either written or printed, relating to the individual alluded to. And the Committee were also united in prospect that thou wouldst not be travelling in that unity of the body, so essential to the preservation of Christian fellowship, until thou mayst give evidence of thy intention to regard this advice. I was likewise requested to bring into thy view in a tender and affectionate manner, the suspension for the present of thy visit, if it may be done consistently with thy own apprehensions of religious duty.

"I have thus endeavoured to discharge the duties assigned me according to my understanding, although I am aware of its being far short of producing that mutual interest which a personal interview would have produced, yet I trust thou wilt give the subject referred to, due place in thy mind, and justly appreciate the interest manifested by the Committee for thy welfare and that of the Church."

Notwithstanding the counsel thus offered him, he proceeded on his journey; and from testimonies which we have received, it appears that the advice thus feelingly given and intended for his own preservation, and the good of the Church, was disregarded by him.

In the 5th month, 1840, in consequence of deficiencies in the answers from subordinate meetings, and "under a concern for the cause of Truth," Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders appointed a committee "to visit subordinate meetings and individuals as way may open for, and occasion may require, and to labor for the restoration and preservation of harmony amongst us."

The Committee thus appointed, obtained an early interview with John Wilbur, and stated to him the various

causes of uneasiness on his account. He was reminded of his improper course in relation to divers friends of our own and other Yearly Meetings, whom he had represented as unsound in religious faith; and that ministers, elders, and other friends were departing from the ancient views of our Society in relation to Baptism, the Supper, &c., producing in many instances a totally unfounded prejudice against those friends: that he had spoken of a division of the Yearly Meeting as being a probable result, soon to take place. He did not deny these charges, but pleaded in justification the alledged unsoundness of certain writings of a Friend travelling as a Minister amongst us, and offered a paper purporting to contain extracts from these writings, to prove his position. To this the committee entirely objected, as not being the matter at issue; doctrines not being at all in question; but the support of Christian order and the Discipline of the Yearly Meeting. When inquired of if he knew of an individual amongst us who had imbibed unsound principles, he objected to the question; and when pressed for an answer, in consequence of his having circulated such statements, he absolutely declined to give it. His improper course, and the injurious effects resulting therefrom to various friends, and above all to the precious cause of Truth, were fully unfolded to him; but after a full conference, in which much brotherly admonition and advice were bestowed upon him, the opportunity terminated without the Committee's receiving any satisfaction from him.

In the 4th month of this year, (1840,) a Minister from a distant Yearly Meeting travelling amongst us on a religious visit, with his companion, put up at John Wilbur's house in the course of their journey, soon after their arrival within our limits. To these friends John Wilbur spoke very freely of many members of Society among whom they would probably pass in pursuance of their

prospect of religious service, and did not hesitate to name various individuals, ministers and others, designating them as unsound, and warning these friends not to go to their houses or to use freedom with them. Before leaving this part of the country, and soon after the occurrence of the Quarterly Meeting, these friends believed it to be their religious duty to call together the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee and to inform them of the communications made to them by John Wilbur, in order that proper care might be extended to him, as his observations about individuals had been very burdensome to them and had much tended to embarrass them in their religious service. A letter from the companion of the friend above alluded to, written after his return home, to a member of the committee, will serve to show something of the nature of these communications. We make from it the following extracts:

"When we first arrived within the limits of your Yearly Meeting, we fell in with John Wilbur, who kindly entertained us at his house, excepting that we found him, as both of us thought, much soured against many friends. He spoke freely of the unsoundness of a minister from England, who was at that time engaged in a religious visit to Friends in America, exhibiting a long list of written charges against him. He also told us he was, and would be supported by your Yearly Meeting, on account of a like unsoundness in many of its members.

"It had been our prospect, on entering the limits of your Yearly Meeting, to proceed early to Providence, though nothing definite had been settled upon; but John Wilbur proposed a different route, in which he said we could attend more Quarterly Meetings, and that he would accompany us as far as Newport. Wishing to attend as many Quarterly Meetings as we could, and being dependent upon our friends for conveyance, we accepted his proposal, and were thus thrown into his company and the company of such friends as he introduced us to, for a considerable time; and hence arose as thou knowest, (and not without some grounds,) a fear on our account in the

minds of many of our dear friends in your Yearly Meeting, which led *me*, and I think I may say *us*, on thy kindly letting us know that such was the case, to believe it necessary for the opening of our way, if for no other cause, to let Friends know that we did not believe with John Wilbur, on many points, and that we were not insensible of the spirit which he indulged towards Friends. This, together with the fact of our knowledge of the danger to which he was exposing both himself and others, may account for our divulging to thee and to other friends of a committee of your Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, sentiments expressed by him.

"In addition to what has been already related, he spoke of a controlling influence in your Yearly Meeting that was not a religious, but a moneyed one, and that if we were not on our guard, they would buy us—that they had already got T. and E. R., from England. On our inquiring about two ministers, who we said were accounted sound friends, and were much beloved when in our country, he said, as nearly as I now remember, that they were once such low, humble-minded friends, but that they had now got to Providence, and were bought over to the same influence. He also said something about their aged parent being distressed about them. He told us too of a friend of New Hampshire being bought over, telling the particulars, but I cannot now remember them. He spoke freely and unreservedly of a division in your Yearly Meeting, which he believed must and would take place. I remember that on my saying that I did not think it would, he remarked I was as one of Job's comforters, for you could not live as you were. He appeared to me to be looking to no other alternative than a division, for an improvement in your condition. I have but little doubt that to nearly all the foregoing facts, there are many friends in your parts that could, if they would, bear ample testimony."

About three weeks after the interview of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee with John Wilbur, a member of the committee received a long and in some points a very objectionable letter from him, in which he implies that the committee were treating with him for supporting sound doctrines, and that they themselves

were upholding doctrines which were unsound. The premises taken in this letter, and the conclusions deduced therefrom, were objected to by every member of the committee present at the interview, as uncandid and unjust; and in divers respects untrue in points of fact. This letter now became an additional cause of concern to the committee, and during the time of our Yearly Meeting in the 6th mo. following, several long opportunities of conference were had with him, without his rendering Friends any satisfaction. In the 8th mo. 1840, another interview took place, which was extended to great length, most members of the committee being present, and all united in sentiment, who imparted much affectionate advice, without inducing any favorable result, there being a determination manifested by him to defend himself in his course, and to condemn all those who questioned its correctness; and the interview closed, leaving an impression of regret and sorrow on the minds of the committee. In the 11th mo. he was again unavailingly laboured with by the committee at large, and at the conclusion of the interview, a few friends were requested again to see him, who accordingly visited him in the 12th mo., and had an opportunity with him in presence of the select members of his particular meeting; but he continued to justify himself and to condemn Friends.

In the 2d mo. following, the committee again attempted unavailingly to produce a change in his mind, and to induce him to give Friends satisfaction.

The labors of the committee appointed by the Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders failing to produce the desired result, they believed it right to submit the case to a committee then under appointment by the Yearly Meeting, for purposes specified in the following minute of their appointment:

"At our Yearly Meeting of Friends for New England, held on Rhode-Island in the 6th mo., 1840, the joint

committee of men and women Friends appointed to visit subordinate meetings and individuals as way might open for, and circumstances in their judgment require, made report of their attention to that service during the past year, and proposed the appointment of a similar committee at the present time, which being deliberately considered, was united with; and at a subsequent sitting, the following friends being named for that service, were appointed to extend a general care on its behalf, for the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and the preservation of love and unity among our members; and in that ability which may be afforded them, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for, under the direction of best wisdom: and they were requested to report to this meeting next year."

Accordingly a number of this committee had an interview with John Wilbur, at East Greenwich, the 4th of 5th mo., 1841. They were fully united in sentiment as to the impropriety of the course pursued by him in the several particulars brought to their notice by the committee of the Select Quarterly Meeting, and they laboured faithfully and affectionately to convince him of his errors, and to endeavor to induce him to give Friends satisfaction. The interview was long continued, and was again renewed next morning, without producing any sensible change in his feelings, or at all reconciling him to Friends.

He contended for the propriety of his course on account of alleged unsoundness in some of the writings of the Minister from England; while the Committee wholly denied this to be the point at issue; these printed writings not being at all involved in the case, but the simple question being whether John Wilbur could with impunity violate our Discipline and the Christian order of our religious Society. They stated, among other things, that the friend alluded to, would, while among us, as any one of our own members, be held answerable to, and be judged by our Discipline, for whatever he should ad-

vance. That any action attempted by us, for acts committed, or sentiments advanced, prior to the date of his certificates, would be a virtual transgression of that safe rule of our society at large, which considers members every where, for their conduct while at home, amenable to the meetings to which they belong. This rule appears by the general consent of all the Yearly Meetings to have been heretofore carefully respected. It necessarily supposes but one and the same qualification throughout the Society for the exercise of Christian care over its members; and consequently any act which should reach within the limits of another Yearly Meeting, intended to arraign one or more of its members for any alleged error of earlier date than that of the certificates they may bring, must be viewed as a breach of the established order among us. Such a course would be to judge not of the individual only, but of the meetings that granted the certificates. If this order should be departed from, no one, in a case of real or imputed error, could know the extent of his liability, or the conclusion of the Society, till judged, severally, by every branch of our church.

During this interview, he stated that in his letter to a member of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee, he did not intend to charge the Committee with holding unsound doctrines; and being inquired of whether he was willing to say further that he did not intend to make any reflections upon them injurious to their standing in society, he requested them to commit to paper what they wished him to state.

The Committee adjourned to meet again the following morning, and in the recess the subjoined paper was prepared, with a hope that John Wilbur might be convinced of the propriety of signing it, so as to remove so far as he could now do it, the unjust charges and insinuations brought by him against the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee.

"Feelings of uneasiness having rested on the minds of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee, in consequence of some expressions contained in a letter written by me to one of their number under date of 5th month, 30th, 1840, from an apprehension that I meant therein to charge the members of that Committee with holding unsound doctrines, I feel willing to relieve their minds from such apprehension by now saying that it was not my intention to be so understood. And further I am willing to say that I regret that any thing was so unguardedly expressed in said letter as to bear the construction that I meant to reflect upon said Committee to the prejudice of their standing in society. And having in said letter attributed to that committee expressions that they do not own as having been made by them, I am willing to believe that I misunderstood the sentiments they meant to convey; and consequently to withdraw such charges."

On presenting this essay to him, although as the committee thought it was so worded that he could hardly fail to receive it, especially as he proposed at the previous interview that a paper of this purport should be prepared, he declined to sign it, and the interview ended. On the 13th of 6th month, the committee again met at Newport, agreeably to their adjournment, twenty-seven members being present. A long conference was again held with him, resulting as heretofore. A few friends were separated, affectionately and earnestly to labour with him, and the committee adjourned to the 15th inst. At this adjourned meeting, John Wilbur was not present, and the friends who had by request had an interview with him in the recess of the meetings, now reported that they had not been able to induce him to give Friend's satisfaction, and that they thought the case nearly hopeless.

The Yearly Meeting at this time being apprehensive that the existing state of things in the Society still demanded an extension of care from them, continued their committee, with a similar minute to that made in their appointment last year. The committee thus appointed,

met on the 17th, and named four friends to have an interview with John Wilbur, and adjourned to the next morning. On the 18th, they met according to adjournment, 25 members being present.

The original cause of concern on the part of Friends with him was again stated; his letter to a member of the Select Quarterly Meeting's Committee was read, and also part of a letter from him dated 3d mo. 11th, 1841, to a young friend in Dover Quarterly Meeting, calling upon certain friends to give him the state of things in that quarter. John Wilbur being present, was called upon to reply to the case, if he saw fit; upon which he made some remarks, but not to much extent, saying he wanted the charges in writing, &c. During this meeting, much tender brotherly counsel and advice, by several of the committee, was bestowed, in order for his restoration to the unity and harmony of friends. On leaving the committee, he said he was willing they should proceed in the case in the manner they thought best, and remarked as he departed from the room, "Friends, do as you please, I have no concessions to make."

Subsequent to this time, the Yearly Meeting's Committee frequently met and solidly considered this sorrowful case, that had produced so much uneasiness, and in relation to which so much patient but ineffectual labour had been bestowed; and two of the committee were encouraged to visit him again at his own house, and make another effort to convince him of his departures from right order and discipline, and to persuade him to return and be reconciled to Friends. They accordingly waited upon him and spent the night under his roof, and with great tenderness and brotherly regard, entreated him to turn from his course and make those concessions which the cause of truth required. But to this he turned a deaf ear and refused to give any satisfaction.

At the close of South Kingstown Monthly Meeting, in

11th mo., 1841, John Wilbur called together the select members, and after stating some instances of what he considered encroachments on the privileges of Monthly Meetings, and individuals, all of which had reference to his own case, he desired that the select members might take a firm stand against the measures of the Quarterly Meeting. The proposition being disapproved, was abandoned.

It now appearing fully evident that any attempt at further labor would be unavailing, on the 23d of the 4th mo., 1842, the following statement of the case was prepared and signed by the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and presented to South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, viz.:

"We the Committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting to extend a general care on its behalf 'for the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and the preservation of love and unity among our members, and in that ability that may be afforded us, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for, under the direction of best Wisdom,' having had our minds introduced into deep concern and exercise on account of the course pursued for some time past by John Wilbur, a member of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, in the station of a minister, believe that the time is now come for us to state some of the particulars wherein he has departed from the good order of our religious Society, in the disregard of our Christian Discipline.

"He has circulated an anonymous pamphlet which impeached the character of our Society, and in which some of its important doctrines, as exemplified in the religious engagements of some of its faithful ministers, are reproachfully held up to view; and which purports to contain the proceedings of London Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, with the sentiments of divers friends therein named, when the subject of liberating a minister to visit this country was before that meeting; the object of which, together with sundry letters which he has circulated, appears to be, to induce the belief that the con-

cern did not receive the unity of the meeting, and that the clerk did not act in conformity with the true sense and judgment of the meeting, in signing the certificate; thus endeavoring to invalidate both the proceedings and conclusions of a meeting in unity with this Yearly Meeting, and whose certificate on behalf of the same friend was received and united with as entered on our records. And while the friend was in this country and engaged in the discharge of his apprehended religious duty, with full certificates of unity from the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings of which he is a member, and the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders of London, and which were duly presented, received and accredited in all the Yearly Meetings in this country, except one which he did not attend; —and thus was he at liberty for religious service within their limits, in the full and acknowledged character of an approved and authenticated minister of the Society of Friends, — John Wilbur, for want as we believe of an humble abiding in the Truth, has circulated divers letters, one or more of which appears to have been written in England, and others originating with himself, addressed to different friends in this country, which were intended to shew that the minister thus liberated for religious service, was not in unity with his friends at home, contrary to the long established order of our religious Society, and designed to close his way in the minds of Friends. And we also believe, for want of maintaining his integrity in that dependence upon the Holy Spirit, which would have preserved him in unity with Friends, he has indulged in a spirit of detraction, in speaking and writing, by which the religious character of divers friends in our own and other Yearly Meetings has been much misrepresented. Many friends were introduced into deep concern on his account, and several of them treated with him in tenderness and love in relation to it; but without producing any apparent change in his mind; and there having been a committee appointed by Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting of Ministers and Elders, in the 5th mo., 1840, of which he was a member, on account of existing deficiencies, as manifested by the answers to the queries, and under a concern for the cause of Truth; and they having been made acquainted with John Wilbur's course as last above stated, and he having made divers

assertions tending to induce dissatisfaction among Friends, and with the proceedings of our Yearly Meeting in various particulars, and calculated to produce divisions therein; and also to disturb the unity of different Yearly Meetings, and to alienate the feelings of their members from each other; sought an opportunity with him, in which they endeavored to show him the effects of his proceedings, both upon himself and others; but he, so far from receiving these labors of love in the spirit in which they were administered, soon after wrote a letter to one of the committee, in which he made unjust insinuations, and preferred charges against them which they deny in points of fact. They nevertheless continued their care and labor, but his mind appearing closed against their advice, in the 5th mo., 1841, we at their request believed it to be our duty to extend care in his case. And it is with deep regret and sorrow, we have observed the effect his course of conduct has produced in lessening that regard for the wholesome restraints of the Discipline, and for the labor of faithful friends for the preservation of that good order, love and unity which are essential to the peace and welfare of the body.

"We have had repeated opportunities with him in which we have labored to convince him of his errors; but this desirable object not having been accomplished, and after having waited several months to afford him opportunity to make satisfaction for his deviations, and two of the committee having unavailingly visited him at his own house, and there not appearing that change in his mind, which is necessary to his being restored to the unity of Friends, we now believe it incumbent upon us in discharge of the service confided to us by the Yearly Meeting, to recommend his case to the immediate notice and care of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting." *

---

* The Discipline of our Yearly Meeting provides no specific mode of bringing the case of offenders before our Monthly Meetings. The more general practice of Friends with us, is that complaints come to the Monthly Meetings from the overseers, either through the Preparative Meetings or otherwise. But the support of good order and discipline, from the existing state of things in different meetings, has rendered a departure from this course necessary in divers instances, both in early and later time, as fully appears from the Records of various meetings.

The Yearly Meeting's Committee having in full unity adopted the foregoing document, appointed several of their number to attend South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, to be held on the 25th of the 4th mo., and lay the same before that meeting; to which service they attended and presented the communication to said meeting, which was read and directed to be recorded; and a committee of four friends was appointed to visit John Wilbur on the occasion. When the above communication was read in the meeting, it appeared he did not expect it would be entered upon the records, and he manifested much objection to it, notwithstanding he remarked, "I am glad it has come here, it has long been a suffering case, and now I shall be tried by *my friends*." The friend who was now clerk of the meeting, a worthy elder in Society, it was believed would act impartially in the case. At the next Monthly Meeting, it being their usual time for the appointment of clerk, and the usage of that meeting being, for the representatives from the Preparative Meetings to propose the name of a clerk to the meeting, they met, but could not agree upon a name; a part of them being in favor of the re-appointment of the old Clerk, and the others for substituting a person in his place who, in divers respects, was considered unsuitable for the station. The meeting was informed that the representatives could not agree upon a clerk, and it was proposed by those in favor of sustaining the order of Society, that the subject should be deferred one month; while on the other hand violent opposition was made to this course, and another person proposed as clerk, whose name had not been under consideration by the representatives, when together for that service. Much tumult and disorder ensued many taking an active part in producing it, who were not in the practice of regularly attending meetings for discipline, nor careful in the support of our Christian testimonies. After a scene of great disorder, which was continued for

a long time, the clerk, after bearing his testimony against their proceedings, withdrew from the table without making any minute in the case; and the individual who had thus been proposed out of the established practice of that meeting, assumed the place, and made a minute appointing himself as clerk for the ensuing year. Thus was a person placed at the table in an irregular manner, and contrary to the judgment of many well concerned and consistent friends. The next irregular step was to make an addition to the committee appointed the previous month in the case of John Wilbur. Five persons were added to the committee; four of whom were his family connections, and all of them it was believed, very much under his influence. As an evidence of the arrangement made out of meeting, in relation to the appointment of this addition to the Committee, it may be mentioned, that when a friend was named, who it was believed would act with impartiality, a son-in-law of John Wilbur objected to his name, alleging as a reason, that he was requested by John Wilbur to do so, should he be nominated; and the acting clerk accordingly refused to take his name.

In the 6th mo., 1842, the Yearly Meeting again appointed a Committee to act on its behalf, with the same concern in view as heretofore. At a meeting of this Committee at Newport, the 17th of 6th mo., 1842, twenty-three members being present, they were united in advising Timothy C. Collins, the former Clerk, not to give up the books and papers of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, but to keep them safely, as the proceedings of that meeting in the appointment of Clerk had not been regular.

On the 27th of 6th mo. a number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee again attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting. The following is an extract from the minutes made on the occasion.

"Most of the proceedings of the Monthly Meeting were

conducted in a very exceptionable manner; and on the part of some of its members disorderly in no small degree, and the Committee became apprehensive that the members who constitute this meeting in their present disjointed and unsettled state, are not in a situation to hold a Monthly Meeting to the honour and reputation of society. And finding as we did that they had at their previous Monthly Meeting displaced the Clerk in an unusual and abrupt manner, and appointed another to that office as before stated, all of which was against the judgment and wishes of the solid portion of the members; we, therefore, with a view to the promotion of unity and harmony among them, believed it right to advise the meeting to reinstate the former Clerk, and the present one to withdraw from the table. This advice and proposal a considerable portion of the members objected to, and refused to comply with, and manifested great disrespect towards the Committee, by many unkind expressions and insinuations. We were likewise informed that at their last meeting they made an addition of five to the committee appointed in the 4th mo. last, in the case of John Wilbur; which addition or appointment, with its attendant unjustifiable circumstances, was cause of regret to the rightly exercised members of the meeting, and we think is evidently calculated to embarrass, if not entirely defeat any just decision in that case. In taking a view of the state and condition of that meeting, and the transactions here detailed, we are induced to believe that what has already transpired, is only the precursor of a still greater departure from good order and the truth, even to open revolt.

"It seems proper further to note that the becoming moderation and christian meekness evinced by the rightly exercised part of the meeting, afforded us the comfortable assurance that the true seed, although oppressed and borne down, is far from being extinct."

On the 11th of the 7th mo. following, six of the Yearly Meeting's Committee met those appointed by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting in the case of John Wilbur and proceeded to lay before them full documentary evidence to establish each point contained in the communication addressed to the Monthly Meeting against him. After going through with which, he in his defence

brought before the committee what purported to be extracts from the writings of the friend from England, towards whom he had manifested his opposition. To this they objected as being wholly irrelevant to the case; the complaint against him being for a violation of the order and discipline of the Society; and upon its being finally decided by most of the Monthly Meeting's Committee, to allow him to take what course he chose in justification of himself, the Yearly Meeting's Committee presented them with the following written memorandum, and withdrew, viz.: "As you have decided not to confine the investigation to the charges submitted in the document presented to the Monthly Meeting; but allow the subject of doctrines to be introduced in justification of the charges; we must decline remaining any longer present with the Committee."

On the 25th of 7th mo., several of the Yearly Meeting's Committee attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting. It was very apparent that those who attempted to control the proceedings of the meeting, through the assistance of their clerk, who was irregularly and improperly appointed, were not qualified to conduct the affairs of the Church; being apparently deficient in a religious sense of the weight and importance of the work.

After this meeting, the Yearly Meeting's Committee presented the following communication to Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, held the 4th of 8th month, 1842.

"*To Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting:*

"A number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, having several times recently attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, have become satisfied, that from the want of love and unity, and from the spirit of insubordination manifest amongst them, in the management of the concerns of Society, they are not in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the Church to the honour of

Truth: and we are united in judgment that the immediate care of the Quarterly Meeting needs to be extended in the case. 7th mo. 25th, 1842."

The subject being thus brought before the Quarterly Meeting, and the answers to the queries from South-Kingstown, and also from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, manifesting great deficiencies, a committee was appointed, and the following minute made in the case, viz:

"At Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, held at Portsmouth, the 4th of 8th mo., 1842, the following communication from the Yearly Meeting's Committee was received at this time. And it appearing by the answers to the queries that there is a want of that love and unity which are essential to the best interests of the body, both in South-Kingstown and Swanzey Monthly Meetings; the whole subject received our deliberate and solid consideration, and we appoint the following friends to visit those meetings and labor in conjunction with the Yearly Meeting's Committee, for the preservation of right order and the promotion of love and unity; and they are requested to act in our behalf in rendering such advice and assistance to said meetings and individuals as best Wisdom may direct, and report to our next meeting."

On the 22d of the 8th mo., 1842, a number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, in conjunction with the Committee of the Quarterly Meeting, again attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting. The following extract from the minutes of the first named committee, gives an account of their proceedings, viz:

"When the opening minute, and the minute of the Quarterly Meeting, making the appointment of a committee were read, a report from the committee in John Wilbur's case was called for by a member; which was immediately presented and read. It was signed by seven members, and stated in substance, that they had heard the Yearly Meeting's Committee and John Wilbur, and that they were of the judgment that the evidence adduced did not support the charges; and it ended in recommending the dismissal of the complaint against him.

"A report was also presented signed by two of the committee, stating, substantially, that they considered all the charges fully verified, and that they differed entirely in judgment from the other members of the committee, &c. This report they refused for a considerable time to read. In favor of the reading, it was stated, that they being a part of the committee, had a right to be heard as to their judgment in the case, as that would give the meeting an understanding of the whole matter as viewed by all the Committee. They at length yielded, and after it was read, they urged the reception of the report signed by the seven; and it appeared that those who were in favor of receiving it, were nearly all of them John Wilbur's near relatives:—among them were one son, four sons-in-law, and a number of his connexions more remote; there being only one or two who were unconnected either by consanguinity or affinity. It therefore appeared, as far as the preparing of the report and advocating its reception were concerned, to be almost entirely a family matter.

"The committee held up to their view the serious consequences of the course they were pursuing, in attempting thus to restore him, as it would be done without his making any concession, and he thereby would be left a member while he was out of unity with the great body of Friends. To obviate which, it was proposed that the case be deferred one month, to give the committee an opportunity of further labour with him to produce, if it might be, a reconciliation with friends, that his restoration might be in the harmony and unity of Society. This was also the united advice of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee to the Monthly Meeting. This course was earnestly opposed; some saying they were aware of the authority of the Quarterly Meeting to give them advice, but as the Monthly Meeting had a right to act independently according to their own judgment, they might receive or reject it, as they thought proper: if they had no independence of action, it was not advice, but a mere mandate. Thus they continued to set at nought and entirely reject the counsel and advice administered to them, by both committees then present; and finally a minute was made accepting the report of the Committee of seven, restoring John Wilbur to membership, contrary to

the expressed sense and judgment of divers well concerned and consistent members of that meeting."*

The Quarterly Meeting's Committee again attended South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, the 24th of 10th mo., 1842, and presented to it the following communication, viz.:

"The Committee appointed by the Quarterly Meeting to visit South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, and for other services, now believe it right to state to South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, that having taken into our deliberate consideration the proceedings of that meeting in the eighth month last, and other proceedings connected with it, which have had the effect to produce the present unhappy differences existing in that meeting, and the state of insubordination in which it now is, have come to the conclusion, that the placing of Samuel Sheffield at the table, to act as Clerk, in the fifth month last, in the irregular and disorderly manner in which it was effected; and by which procedure the feelings and views of many of the members were wholly disregarded; and being satisfied that he took his seat at the table and made the minute appointing himself, out of the usual and long established order of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting in appointing their Clerk: We do therefore unite with the advice previously given to Timothy C. Collins, by the Yearly Meeting's Committee, that he should continue for the present to retain the records of that meeting. And as this committee were also fully united in the advice given in the eighth month last to South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, not to accept the report in the case of John Wilbur, presented by that portion of the committee, five of whom were added contrary to the general usage of our Society, to the committee appointed in the fourth month to have charge of the case, after Samuel Sheffield took his seat at the table in the fifth month; and as we have cause to apprehend, from the manner in which they

---

* Two of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, present at this time, have been charged with attempting to break up the meeting, while the report in the case of John Wilbur was under consideration in the Women's Meeting, which charge they utterly deny.

were selected, and from their relationship to the individual under care, it was with a view to prevent the impartial exercise of our Christian Discipline: We, therefore, now on behalf of the Quarterly Meeting, advise South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting at this time to remove Samuel Sheffield from acting as Clerk, and to re-appoint Timothy C. Collins to the service;—to dismiss the case of Timothy C. Collins from their records, and discharge the Committee appointed last month to visit him as an offender for retaining the records of said meeting as advised to do by this Committee;—and likewise that the decision in the eighth month last, as entered on their minutes in relation to John Wilbur, against the judgment of many concerned friends of that meeting, and regardless of the united advice of this Committee, be now set aside, and be made void and of no effect."

The meeting not being willing to receive this advice, as it was bound to do by the provisions of Discipline, and then, if not satisfied therewith to appeal therefrom; and the advice being offered in the name and on behalf of the Quarterly Meeting, the Committee deemed it proper to make the following report of the case to the Quarterly Meeting in the 11th month, proposing that South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting should be dissolved, viz.:

"*To Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting to be held at Somerset:*

The Committee appointed to visit Swanzey and South-Kingstown Monthly Meetings, and for other services, report:—that several of their number attended two sittings of Swanzey Monthly Meeting, and communicated such advice as appeared to them suitable at the time and as way opened for: that they attended the Monthly Meeting of South-Kingstown in the eighth month, and in conjunction with a number of the Yearly Meeting's Committee then present, endeavored to labor, we trust in a spirit of love, for the preservation of right order in the exercise of the Discipline, and to encourage a proper submission to the advice of superior meetings, so essential to the best interests of our Society. We regret to inform that our counsel did not meet on the part of many with a kind reception,

and the disposition was manifest and prevailed, to act as an independent body.

The following communication was prepared and presented at their last meeting, viz.: [cited above.] This communication was read in the meeting and directed to be recorded, and its further consideration referred to their next meeting. Several friends expressed their desire that its recommendations should be conformed to by the meeting. From what has been witnessed by the Committee, and from authentic information derived from others, they have come to the conclusion after a careful consideration of the subject, that South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting is not in a suitable state to conduct the affairs of the church in accordance with our Christian Discipline, nor consistently with our religious profession. We therefore submit it to the Quarterly Meeting as our judgment, that South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting be dissolved, and that the members constituting it be joined to those constituting Greenwich Monthly Meeting."

The report was weightily considered and fully united with, and the meeting accordingly dissolved; and the following minute made in the case, viz.:

"The Committee appointed at our last meeting to visit Swanzey and South-Kingstown Monthly Meetings, and for other services, made the following report, viz.: [see said report above] which is accepted; and after a solid consideration of the subject, this meeting concluded, with the unity of the Women's Meeting, to discontinue and dissolve South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, and to join its members to those composing Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and to join the Select Preparative Meeting to those of Greenwich Monthly Meeting; the books of record and papers of the former are to be delivered to such person as the latter may appoint to receive them. The proceedings of South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting against Timothy C. Collins, after being informed by the Committee acting on our behalf of the advice given to him, are hereby annulled and declared to have no effect whatever. And the minute made in the 5th month, adding to the Committee appointed in the 4th month, upon the complaint made against John Wilbur, of five members, and the minute made in the 8th month, accept-

ing the report of a part of the Committee in his case, being at the time made against the direct advice of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee, are also hereby annulled and declared void. All other unfinished business now before that meeting, is directed to be transferred to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and Committees and others under appointment by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, are requested to report to Greenwich Monthly Meeting. The Committee now under appointment are requested to have a copy of this minute, signed by the Clerk, read at the opening of their next Monthly Meeting at Hopkinton, and to request those assembled quietly to separate and consider themselves of Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and under its care. At Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting held at Somerset 11th mo. 3d, 1842."

The Committee of the Quarterly Meeting attended the next Monthly Meeting of South-Kingstown held at Hopkinton, the 21st of the 11th month, and read the minute of the Quarterly Meeting; when all those who were in unity with said meeting quietly withdrew from the house: while the others remained together and came to the conclusion to appeal to our next Yearly Meeting from the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting.

At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends held at Cranston 11th mo. 28th, 1842, the foregoing communication from the Quarterly Meeting was read, and the following minute made in relation thereto, viz.;

"After deliberate consideration on the contents of said extracts from the minutes of the Quarterly Meeting, and in due submission as a subordinate branch of said meeting, we acquiesce therein, and acknowledge and receive the members heretofore constituting South Kingstown Monthly Meeting, as members of this meeting, subject alike with our other members to its future disciplinary action and decision; and in this we have the concurrence of our Women's Meeting; and the members heretofore constituting South Kingstown Select Meeting are in like manner joined to Greenwich Select Meeting. And it is the conclusion of this meeting, that Preparative meetings be held as heretofore until otherwise directed, viz.: at

South Kingstown, Western, and Hopkinton; and the said meetings are requested to report to this meeting, and the Clerk is requested to furnish each of the said Preparative meetings with a copy of this minute.

The Clerk of this meeting is appointed to call for and receive the books of record and papers of the late Monthly Meeting of South-Kingstown."

At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends, held at East Greenwich 1st mo. 2nd, 1843, the following minute was made, viz:

"It appearing by the records of the late Monthly Meeting of South Kingstown, that a Committee was appointed in the 4th month last, in the case of John Wilbur, to labor with him, and report their sense to a future meeting: agreeably to the directions of the Quarterly Meeting, as by minute of said meeting sent down and received by us at our last Monthly Meeting will appear—said Committee are now requested to report to this meeting."

The following action was taken in the case at the next Monthly Meeting, viz:

"At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends held at Coventry 1st mo. 30th, 1843. The Committee in the case of John Wilbur as referred to by minute of our last Monthly Meeting, and who were thereby requested to report to the meeting, made the following, viz:

We of the Committee appointed by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting in the 4th mo. last, in the case of John Wilbur, report: that we have attended to the duties assigned us by meeting John Wilbur and the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and hearing the evidence in the case; and which was in our judgment sufficient to substantiate the charges preferred against him, which charges having relation altogether to his departure from Discipline and good order, it was evident to us that his defence ought to be predicated on that ground alone; and whereas the other part of the Committee were willing to allow him to make his defence, by leaving this, the only legitimate ground, and go into a justification of his conduct by allusions to doctrines, which in our view was entirely foreign to the subject matter under consideration: we therefore felt ourselves bound to dissent from such a course altogether; and

it is our united sense and judgment that he is not in a situation and state of mind to be continued a member of our religious society; which we submit to Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends next to be held at Coventry.

HEZEKIAH BABCOCK,
WILLIAM S. PERRY.

South-Kingstown, 1st mo. 21, 1843.

Which report, after a time of solid and deliberate consideration of the subject was united with: and he the said John Wilbur, is accordingly disowned the right of membership in our religious Society: having the unity of the Women's Meeting herein."

At Greenwich Monthly Meeting of Friends, held at Cranston, 2d mo. 27th, 1843, the following minute was made:

"The Committee to prepare an essay of a minute to be placed on our records in relation to the disownment of John Wilbur as a member of our religious Society, propose the following,—to be preceded by the communication made to South-Kingstown, viz: The Committee appointed by South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, in the 4th mo. last, in the case of John Wilbur, on account of the preceding communication, and in accordance with the decision of the Quarterly Meeting, requested to report to this meeting; having at our last meeting, besides their written report, verbally reported that two of their number sought an interview with him on the subject of their appointment, which he declined; and that the other two members of the Committee, declined to act in the case, we were induced to unite with them in the conclusion that further attempts to labour with him would not be productive of benefit, and that it was incumbent on us for the clearing of Truth, to disown him as a member of our religious Society.

"In coming to this painful conclusion, the meeting has been deeply and solemnly impressed with the conviction, that his departures from our Christian order have been the result of a want of a humble dependence on the teachings of the Holy Spirit, which would have preserved him in the path of propriety and safety. We feel an earnest desire that through mercy, he may yet be brought to a living sense of his situation, and be favored to attain that place

of true humility, in which he will be concerned to seek reconciliation with Friends."

From the decision of Greenwich Monthly Meeting, John Wilbur appealed to Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, which confirmed the judgment of the Monthly Meeting, in disowning him from our religious Society. From this decision of the Quarterly Meeting, he appealed to the Yearly Meeting, in the 6th month, 1844, and that meeting, by a very united voice, confirmed the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting. The following is the minute of the Yearly Meeting made in his case, viz:

"The Committee appointed on third day forenoon, the 18th, to take into consideration the case of John Wilbur's appeal from the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in confirming the judgment of Greenwich Monthly Meeting, in disowning him, made a report signed by all the Committee, [twenty-one in number,] except one: that having all attended to their appointment, they had heard the appellant and the Committee of the said Quarterly Meeting, fully in the case, as acknowledged by the parties, and that after a time of solemn deliberation, they had come to the conclusion that the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting ought to be confirmed; which after a time of deliberate consideration thereon, was united with and accepted by this meeting; and the judgment of said meeting confirmed accordingly.

"And John Wilbur being called in, agreeably to his request, the conclusion of the meeting in his case, as embraced in the above minute, was read in his presence."

While present in the Meeting, he acknowledged that he had been kindly and fully heard by the Committee.

Agreeably to notice given, a portion of the members of the late South-Kingstown Monthly Meeting, appealed to the Yearly Meeting in 1843, from the decision of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting in dissolving said Monthly Meeting, and attaching its members to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, and the judgment of the Quarterly Meeting was confirmed by the Yearly Meeting. The following is the minute in the case:

"The Committee appointed on third day morning last to take into consideration the case of appeal from the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in dissolving South Kingstown Monthly Meeting, and annexing the members constituting it to Greenwich Monthly Meeting, now produced a report signed by thirteen of their number, informing the meeting, that having given a full hearing to the parties respectively, they had, upon deliberation, come to the conclusion that the judgment of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting ought to be confirmed; which after a time of deliberate consideration thereon, was united with and accepted by this meeting, and the judgment of said meeting confirmed accordingly." *

As further evidence of the insubordination existing in this Yearly Meeting we proceed to state, that in Swanzey Monthly Meeting, for a long time past, there has been a want of that love and unity which are essential to the right conducting of the affairs of Truth. More than two years since, Committees were appointed in that meeting to propose the names of Clerk and Overseers of Society, but they were unable to agree upon friends for those stations. The state of this meeting had claimed the attention of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and also of a Committee of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting previous to our last Yearly Meeting; and much labor had been bestowed by them to remedy the existing difficulties, and to produce that organization of the meeting that would enable it to carry into effect the Discipline, the administration of which had been seriously interrupted.

At our Yearly Meeting in 1844, the Committee to visit subordinate meetings reported, that in one or more of our Monthly Meetings, our Christian Discipline was not main-

* This committee consisted of twenty-one Friends—six of whom presented a counter report, in which they dissented from the above report, on account of what they apprehended irregularity in some of the proceedings: and two declined to sign either report; but when the case was under consideration in the meeting, one expressed his unity with the report of the majority.

tained to the honor of Truth, and a Committee was again appointed to extend a general care on our behalf for the preservation of love and unity among our Members; the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and in the support of the Discipline of the Church, and in the ability that may be afforded them, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for under the direction of best Wisdom."

The Yearly Meeting's Committee, with a number of the Quarterly Meeting's Committee then under appointment, met with those two committees in the 7th month, and united with a part of them in their proposing to the meeting the names of certain persons for Clerks and Overseers.

With the exception of two or three individuals, all the members of those committees of the Monthly Meeting, either united with the names proposed, or expressed their acquiescence therein, when in the presence of the committee; but those who had thus acquiesced, subsequently did not sign the reports to the Monthly Meeting. The names of the individuals thus agreed upon, were accordingly reported to the Monthly Meeting, and the reports were fully united with by the large body of the members of that meeting, although a few individuals opposed it.

The Yearly Meeting's Committee then presented to the meeting the following written advice, viz.:

"*To Swanzey Monthly Meeting:*

"Dear Friends,—The Committee appointed by the Yearly Meeting to extend a general care on its behalf for the preservation of love and unity among our members, the maintenance of our Christian principles and testimonies, and the support of the Discipline of the Church, and in the ability that may be afforded them, to assist and advise such meetings and members as circumstances may require and way open for, under the direction of best Wisdom; having, from a belief that our duty under

our appointment required it, met with the committees of your meeting, appointed about two years since, to propose the names of Overseers and Clerks; and apprehending that the cause of Truth and the right exercise of our Christian Discipline, urgently demand that there should be no further delay in the cases, were united in giving the following advice:—It appearing by the voluntary declaration of those members of a committee, who were present, appointed as we apprehend without the authority of discipline, and out of the usual order of society, to assist the overseers when they presented a complaint against an individual, that they believed Edmund Chase to be innocent of the charges preferred against him by said individual; and that they did not intend in their report to the Monthly Meeting to implicate him; we were united in judgment that this document ought not to be retained by the Monthly Meeting among its papers, but destroyed.

"The Committee on Overseers informed us that they had agreed upon five friends for this station, and there being but one of them from within the limits of Fall River Preparative Meeting, (it being usual to appoint two from that meeting,) in view of the circumstances, we were united in advising the committee to propose to the meeting to appoint Edmund Chase, in addition to those named, there not appearing any ground for the objection originally urged against his appointment. The Committee in relation to Clerks, informed us that they could not agree upon names, and after a full consideration of the case, we thought it right to advise the committee to propose to the Monthly Meeting to appoint David Shove for Clerk, and Jonathan Freeborn for Assistant Clerk; and we are now united in advising the Monthly Meeting to make these appointments, and carry into effect these recommendations, believing that thereby the best interests of the Monthly Meeting, and its preservation in unity with the Quarterly and Yearly Meetings will be promoted.

On behalf of the Committee,
ROWLAND GREENE."

Swanzey, 7th mo. 29, 1844.

The same individuals who opposed making the appointments, now opposed the acceptance of this advice,

and Thomas Wilbur, the Clerk, who was one of the number, and who is a son of John Wilbur, refused to record the clearly expressed sense of the meeting, although earnestly advised to do so, by the Yearly Meeting's Committee in attendance.

The condition of this meeting as it then stood was presented to the Quarterly Meeting in the 8th month, which released its committee previously under appointment, and appointed another to visit Swanzey Monthly Meeting and assist in its due organization, that our Christian Discipline might be supported as in former days to the honor of Truth.

At the following Monthly Meeting the individual who had previously acted as Clerk, still persisting to hold that station, contrary to the fully expressed sense of the meeting, and to the earnest entreaty and advice of the Yearly Meeting's Committee, and the Monthly Meeting having again at this time, (with the exception of those persons who had manifested their opposition at the last meeting,) united in the appointment as Clerk, of the friend who had been selected at the previous meeting, the individual thus selected proceeded to open the meeting, and the representatives from all the Preparative Meetings presented to him the reports from those meetings, and all answered to the calling of their names. During the time that he was preparing his opening minute, one of those who had opposed his appointment, walked to the Clerk's table, which Thomas Wilbur continued to occupy and refused to leave, and placed upon it a paper, which he immediately arose and read, without the liberty of the meeting, which was believed to be an extract from the revised statutes of Massachusetts, showing what was the penalty for disturbing meetings for Divine Worship, and other religious assemblies.

Notwithstanding the meeting had thus appointed David Shove as Clerk, and he was acting in that capacity,

Thomas Wilbur continued to sit at the table, and to form and read minutes; and to prevent confusion, Friends, after having read the minute of the Quarterly Meeting appointing its Committee, adjourned to a later hour in the afternoon; by far the larger part of the Men's Meeting, and all the Women, withdrawing from the house, and mostly assembling again at the hour of adjournment, to transact the business of the meeting. The persons who sustained the former Clerk in his decision against the judgment of the meeting, with several women who were also disaffected towards Society, continued to hold what they call Monthly Meetings; and at Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in the eleventh month, they presented an account, purporting to come from Swanzey Monthly Meeting, which was not received, or in any way acknowledged. After the business of the Quarterly Meeting was concluded, these individuals, with a few from the other Monthly Meetings, both men and women, most of whom had for a length of time openly manifested a want of unity with Friends, remained in the house, and called themselves Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, appointing Clerks, and a committee to visit subordinate meetings. This committee, thus appointed, has since visited the Monthly Meetings, and attempted to sit in them, and to be recognized as a committee from the Quarterly Meeting, organized as we have described, in a wholly unprecedented and irregular manner. Most of them being already under dealing as offenders in their respective Monthly Meetings, and refusing to leave Friends select—for the support of our Discipline, adjournment has been resorted to, in order to be freed from this intrusion. A few individuals have been found in each of the Monthly Meetings in Rhode-Island Quarter, who being disaffected towards the body of Friends, have, under the advisement of this committee, united in forming what they denomi-

nate Monthly Meetings, assuming to themselves the names of those meetings respectively.

At the opening of the Yearly Meeting on second day morning, the 16th of 6th mo., the Clerk proceeded to call over the names of the Representatives from the several Quarterly Meetings (eight in number), which had been previously entered, as customary, from the accounts that had been handed him from those meetings; when it appeared that all the Friends named in those accounts were present, except three, for whose absence satisfactory reasons were given.

After commencing to read the minute in which the names of the Representatives had been thus entered, another paper addressed to "New-England Yearly Meeting of Friends," was laid upon the table, also purporting to be an account from Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting; and by direction of the Yearly Meeting, the names of the persons therein given as Representatives to this meeting were also entered upon the minutes and called, when it appeared that they were all present. The last named account was signed by Charles Perry, Assistant Clerk, it being stated that the Clerk was prevented from acting by sickness.

A proposition was then made, and united with by the meeting, that the Representatives from the other seven Quarterly Meetings, those named in the two accounts from Rhode-Island being excluded, should constitute a Committee, before whom the persons claiming to be Representatives from that Quarterly Meeting should be fully heard on the subject of their claims respectively; and that the Committee, after deliberating thereon, should report to the Yearly Meeting which of the two bodies thus claiming, was, in their judgment, the true Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, in unity with and subordinate to this meeting, and entitled to send Representatives thereto—

no objection being made to the case being opened in the meeting in its collective capacity, should this be subsequently judged best. The persons who claimed to be aggrieved, denied the jurisdiction of this committee, and declined entering into any investigation of their case before them, notwithstanding they had previously submitted it to the meeting, preferring charges of unfairness in the appointment of the Representatives in the Quarterly Meetings. They stated that the Representatives were appointed with reference to this business, and that proscriptive measures were employed in one Quarterly Meeting at least, to obtain such as were desired. It was distinctly denied by Friends that any such intention existed —that no friend from any part of the Yearly Meeting could have had any expectation of such a reference when the Representatives were appointed; and in a subsequent sitting, this denial was confirmed by the statements of Friends from each of the Quarterly Meetings so accused.

It may be proper here to remark, that as the meeting had previously expressed its sense, that all those claiming to be members of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting ought to leave the discussion and decision of the question to members from the other Quarters; and as the Representatives from the other Quarters would, under the proposed reference, be judges in the case, these two classes being excluded, the number of those who opposed the reference of the subject to the Representatives, was very small.

This subject having been thus far disposed of, the Meeting came to the conclusion that no other business could with propriety be entered upon by the Yearly Meeting till it was fully determined. And instead of proceeding to the appointment of Clerks on 2d day afternoon, as usual, decided that the Clerks then under appointment should continue to serve the Meeting until the Question was settled.

Two accounts purporting to be from Rhode-Island Quarter, were also presented to the Women's Yearly Meeting, and the whole subject was similarly disposed of by that meeting, by referring it to all the Representatives, except those from Rhode-Island, to report thereon.

Soon after the opening of the afternoon sitting, a person under appointment as one of the Representatives from Sandwich Quarter, rose and said, that a portion of the Representatives had been together, and concluded to propose the name of Thomas B. Gould for Clerk, and Charles Perry for Assistant Clerk. Upon this, several individuals rose in quick succession, and expressed unity with the nomination. The large body of the Representatives informed the meeting, that they had no knowledge that any such proposition was about to be made, and by a very general expression of the members of the meeting, as well as of the Representatives, the course proposed was wholly disapproved. On calling the names of *all* the Representatives in attendance from the several Quarterly Meetings, except Rhode-Island, it appeared by their express declaration, that *forty-one* of their number were not consulted in relation to the appointment of Clerks, and that they now entirely dissent from the appointment of Thomas B. Gould and Charles Perry, while *four* made no response when their names were called, *forty-five* being the whole number in attendance, with the exception of those named in the accounts from Rhode-Island. But the persons thus nominated to act as Clerks, with others, their adherents, proceeded in reading and speaking, to the disturbance of the meeting. The Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, by its fully expressed direction, solemnly protested against their proceedings, and desired them to desist. To this, however, they paid but little attention, and continued to carry on their own business till the adjournment of the meeting. Similar disorderly proceedings took place in

the Women's Meeting, with the exception that the Seceders left the house before the meeting adjourned.

During these disorders, Friends were preserved in much quietness, patiently waiting for an opportunity to commence the business of the Yearly Meeting.

On third day morning, the 17th, the committee in the case of Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, made a report, in which, after giving a statement of the various circumstances connected with the subject referred to their consideration, they express their "united sense and judgment, that the accounts from Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting, signed by David Buffum and Sarah F. Tobey, as Clerks, should be received as the true accounts from said Quarterly Meeting, and that the representatives" therein named "should be considered and acknowledged as the representatives from that Quarterly Meeting to this Yearly Meeting." This report was signed by forty-one men, and thirty-eight women, being all the representatives in attendance in the Men's Meeting, except four, and all in the Women's Meeting, except two, apart from the representatives named in the two accounts from Rhode-Island. After the Report was read, two friends were appointed to inform the representatives named in the account signed by Charles Perry, Assistant Clerk, that the Committee to whom their claims were referred, had made a report, which was about to be considered, and that they might be heard thereon. After a short absence, one of the friends reported that he had delivered the message intrusted to them, to a number of those persons named in the report, whom they found assembled in the yard, in company with others. Having waited a sufficient time, the meeting, after hearing the report a second time, by a very general expression confirmed its conclusions, and thus acknowledged the meeting, of which the accounts were signed by David Buffum and Sarah F. Tobey, as Clerks, to be the true Quarterly Meeting of Rhode-Island, and the Representa-

tives named therein, to be the Representatives from Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting to this Yearly Meeting.

While this subject was under consideration, three persons came into the meeting and demanded the use of the Clerk's table, and the transfer to them of the books and papers belonging to the Yearly Meeting, stating that they were deputed by what they called "New-England Yearly Meeting," to make this demand. The Clerk, in reply, stated that New-England Yearly Meeting was then sitting in this house, and could not deliver the books and papers, nor the occupancy of the Clerk's table or of the house to any other persons.

Since this time, the persons who disturbed us have not attended with us, and we have been favored to transact the various concerns of society claiming our attention, with great harmony and brotherly love.

We believe the number of those disaffected towards Friends, within our limits, to be comparatively small, and are comforted in the view, that the body of Friends among us are united in harmonious labor for the promotion of the cause of Truth.

At New-England Yearly Meeting, 6th mo. 1845.

"The Committee appointed to consider various subjects connected with the welfare of Society, laid before this meeting the foregoing Document, being a Narrative of facts and circumstances that have tended to produce a secession from Friends in this Yearly Meeting, which was read, and being considered, it was united with by a full expression of this Meeting, as being proper information for our own members, and those of other Yearly Meetings, and the Clerk was directed to sign it on our behalf."

From the Minutes of said Meeting,

ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, Jun., Clerk.
HANNAH GOULD, Jun., Clerk.

EPISTLE

TO THE

QUARTERLY AND MONTHLY MEETINGS,

Within the limits of New-England Yearly Meeting, and the individual Members of the Society of Friends.

Beloved Friends:

Assembled together at our accustomed time and place for the transaction of the affairs of our religious society in New-England, with sincere desires for the health and prosperity of all our brethren and sisters in the ever blessed Truth, and the promotion and advancement of the cause of our Redeemer in the earth, circumstances have arisen with which we deem it essential to make you acquainted.

For a long series of years it pleased the Great Head of the Church to watch over us and permit us to meet together in love, and to enable us to result the various important matters which came before us to mutual comfort and edification: we have not been without our trials, but strength was afforded to meet them. We were in great measure spared the afflictions which fell upon Friends in various sections of our society on this continent, from unsoundness in the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion,

producing divisions with them, whilst we continued a united and increasing people.

Many of you are nevertheless sensible that for years past a few individuals in some places have given concern to the rightly exercised among us; that of later time this spirit by which they were influenced has shown itself more conspicuously, and led to separation in one of our quarters. Upon our first gathering together at this time several of those who had thus caused grief to friends appeared and presented an account purporting to be from their Quarterly Meeting, which, with sincere desires that they might have a full opportunity of stating their case, and if needful have the desired relief, was referred in the first place to the Representatives in a body, (exclusive of those from the Quarterly Meeting from which two accounts were presented,) no objection being made to their case being opened in the meeting in its collective capacity, should this be subsequently judged best. The persons who claimed to be aggrieved denied the jurisdiction of this committee, and with others coming to our afternoon sitting, proceeded in what they termed the business of New-England Yearly Meeting, to the interruption of Friends; remaining in the house till the minute of adjournment was read—since which they have not been with us, but as we are informed assembled in another place, thus effecting the sorrowful work of separation, which had been commenced in Rhode-Island Quarterly Meeting. During the time alluded to and since, Friends have been mercifully favored to preserve much mental equanimity and becoming order, proceeding in their business, we trust, in the wisdom of Truth, and in numbers not fewer than in former years.

It is not for us in this communication to enter into those remote causes which have led to this painful result. They might, doubtless, be found in a departure from

humble, lowly waiting upon Christ, and faithfully following the leadings and guidance of his blessed spirit; by unwatchfulness in this respect the door has been opened for the accuser of the Brethren to come in. And it may not be wrong to inquire whether there are not herein evidences of a lack of that deep sense of the fallen condition of man, of our need of that redemption which comes by Christ, and the value of the means provided for our help. Had those who are now troubling us been grounded in that faith which works by love to the purifying of the heart, would they not have found,—as we seek shall we not all find—that necessity for a deep indwelling with the Spirit of Truth, which preserves from such uncalled for and unsanctified proceedings ?

Dear Friends, we have had, and shall have much to bear; misrepresentation of fact in respect of our disciplinary proceedings; false and utterly unfounded charges of a general unsoundness of doctrine amongst us have been widely circulated; brethren and sisters, whose lives are before us, have been unsparingly traduced.

We have with great unanimity issued a statement, which has been deliberately read and considered in both our Men's and Women's Meetings, of the facts of the case, and a declaration of our unshaken faith as Christians and as Friends—these documents we earnestly recommend to your serious attention. Connected with their perusal, let us seek after living aspirations to commit our way in well doing unto the Lord.

From the days of our worthy predecessors, George Fox, Robert Barclay, William Penn, and others, in every trial of this description which has been permitted Friends in this country or our beloved brethren of Great Britain, charges have been freely made, as of false doctrine, misapplied discipline, the rule and influence of station, gifts,

talents, wealth, and learning—with what truth, in past days, their invaluable writings set forth—with no more truth are they now urged.

Man is fallible; but with the sincerity of action which has attended all the movements in this matter, many of you are acquainted, and know full well that the charges are utterly untenable, and proof in these matters impossible; but, affecting as it is, there seems to be a remarkable recklessness in many who have fallen into this snare as to results.

During most of two centuries the Yearly Meetings of Friends have, although independent bodies, occupied much common ground, in addition to that of uniting in the same profession of our Christian faith. Ministers recognized in one, have been so acknowledged, and encouraged to labor in others; the transfer of rights to membership and intermarriage have not been affected by the Yearly Meeting lines.

Regardless of the blessings which those wise provisions of our forefathers have led us to enjoy, the movements now made must cripple, if not destroy arrangements fraught with indescribable benefit, for no definable, certainly no adequate end—discord is introduced, though it may divide between Meetings, near and dear friends, and even embitter the tenderest relations of life, and urged onwards with a blind impetuosity as to results which nothing but the most obvious reasons—as a manifest departure from living faith, or our long cherished testimonies—could justify.

Instead of Friends and Meetings striving to encourage each other in the faithful maintenance of our religious principles before others, the grand aim with some now appears to be, the detection of things in which some dissonance of view may be discovered, to the sad overlooking

of that "charity which hopeth all things," and the weakening of the Society in that testimony to the love, spirituality, purity and simplicity of the gospel which we fully believe has been given us, as a people, to bear.

In thus briefly pointing your attention to the trials which have been permitted to overtake us, it is not our object to introduce you into controversy, or awaken any feelings of irritation towards those through whom the offence has come; but on the contrary, we would guard you against it. Controversy, which so generally seeks the weak side, and not unfrequently attacks the character, is dangerous to all, and especially to the young. We rarely dwell upon or expose the errors of others, without a secret feeling of self satisfaction, which draws from that which should be the constant concern of life—a close attention to our own faults—its results upon individuals and bodies, in the evidences of self-exaltation and a judging spirit but too often afforded, ought to warn us against entering upon it, or proceeding one step beyond the clear requirings of Truth; whilst as to the feelings which ought to pervade our hearts towards our erring friends, a deep sorrow for them in their bewildered state, and a prayerful desire for their restoration should ever predominate. Some of them, we doubt not, have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge; that knowledge, which in a humble abiding before him, we believe He will continue to dispense to the seeking soul. Not entangled in the right hand or the left hand errors which have sorrowfully, at different times, found place and produced schisms in our society, let us strive to keep a straight forward course, walking in the footsteps of our forefathers, as they followed the Lamb.

We believe, dear Friends, that it is incumbent upon us, in much tenderness to spread before you a caution in relation to the multiplied publications that are now very

freely circulated within our limits and elsewhere, "reflecting darkly on Friends," and to revive the admonition of our Discipline, "that no such book, pamphlet or paper, be written, printed, published or privately handed about, by any under our profession." Various publications to which we refer, containing statements, which are not supported by facts, and into which the names of many worthy Friends are very freely introduced, or they in some way designated, and unjustly represented, may surely be regarded in the fullest sense *pernicious;* and as such, they should not be circulated or read.

It has been deeply affecting to us to learn, that under the influence of that delusive spirit to which we have referred, some have accepted the contents of such books, and received written or verbal statements from interested parties, as of almost equal validity with those contained in publications issued by regularly constituted bodies of valuable Friends, a description of document, to which implicit credence has heretofore been given—and under such false impressions, have imbibed and urged individual sentiments, against the solid judgment of the body—proceedings totally at variance with that into which the Truth leads.

The advice contained in an ancient Epistle, put forth by George Whitehead, Stephen Crisp and others, in the year 1666, is applicable to our day, and we urge it upon your serious attention. "If any who are out of the unity with the body of Friends, print or cause to be printed or published in writing anything which is not of service for the Truth, but tends to the reproach and scandal of faithful Friends, or to beget or uphold division or faction; then we do warn and charge all Friends that love the Truth, as they desire it may prosper and be kept clear, to beware and take heed of having any hand in printing, publishing or spreading such books or writings."

Beloved Brethren and Sisters—We commend you to the Lord for safety—we fervently crave your preservation, and that you may witness a unity one with another, in the true fellowship and love of the gospel. In this Meeting various epistles from our Friends of other Yearly Meetings have been read to our comfort, and we have felt it to be a peculiar blessing and cause for thankfulness that we have been favored with the company of divers concerned and qualified Friends from different Yearly Meetings, whose sympathy, unity, and advice, have been truly acceptable, comforting and instructive to us. This meeting has been closely united, and we have been enabled to travel together in sweet and harmonious labor for the cause of Truth.

We are now about to separate, under a humbling sense of the love and mercy of the adorable Head, that he has condescended to be near, and as we trust, to direct us in the steps that we should take in his militant church. We bid you affectionately farewell. May you be favored to possess your souls in patience, enduring all things for Christ's sake—that through watching unto prayer, you may be enabled to perceive the subtile snares of the adversary of souls, and in the silence of all flesh, distinguish between the voice of the true Shepherd and that of the stranger. To this unslumbering Shepherd we commend you. He still careth for the flock, and as they hearken to and obey his voice, will, blessed be his name, keep them in his safe enclosure now and for ever.—Amen.

Signed by direction and on behalf of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, for New-England, held by adjournments from the 15th to the 23rd inclusive, of the sixth month, 1845.

ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, Jun., Clerk.
HANNAH GOULD, Jun., Clerk.

A

DECLARATION

OF

NEW-ENGLAND

YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS,

UPON VARIOUS

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES:

COMPOSED MOSTLY OF EXTRACTS FROM THE APPROVED WRITINGS OF THE SOCIETY.

To our Quarterly and Monthly Meetings, and Friends of the several Yearly Meetings on the American continent.

Dear Friends:

We have come up to this, our annual assembly, with feelings humbled under a sense of varied trials that surround us; and, we trust, with hearts turned unto the source and fountain of all good that we might witness preservation, and that the Lord might graciously make a way for us that his truth might be sustained. And, unworthy as we are in His sight, we feel bound thankfully to acknowledge that we have had good evidence, mercifully granted, that our Heavenly Father has been pleased to remember us—to extend his wing of preservation in good measure over us, and at times has permitted us, not only to take sweet counsel together, but to be refreshed a little with that sustenance which cometh alone from Him—to His great name be the praise.

And while this has been our experience, our dear absent brethren have been feelingly remembered, with desires for their preservation in the truth as it is in Jesus; and, dear friends, may none of us be moved away from the hope of the Gospel, or from that sure mark and badge of the true disciple, the love of the brethren, "for by this," saith Christ, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one unto another."

The painful occurrence of a secession from our religious society having at this time taken place, accompanied by circumstances which have covered our spirits with mourning, we believe ourselves solemnly called upon in this address, to declare that some who have heretofore been under our name, and of whom we had hoped other and better things, influenced as we fear by a dividing spirit, have not only withdrawn themselves from our meeting at this time, but have heretofore, as well as now, uncharitably accused us of departing from the ancient doctrines and testimonies borne by our early predecessors in the truth, and openly declared, that we are unsound in the faith of the Gospel of Christ, as held and promulgated by them.

These accusations, while they have filled our minds with astonishment and sorrow, we feel bound fully and explicitly to deny. Friends of this Yearly Meeting have not so departed. On the contrary, the ancient doctrines held by our Society, in all their fullness and in all their excellence, are unabatedly dear to us.

Friends we are sensible that we are encompassed with weakness, that many of us fall short of fully shewing out in life and conversation, the fruits of these blessed doctrines; nevertheless, they are still precious to us, and our desire is that we may all, through obedience and submission to the sanctifying operation of the spirit of truth, come more and more consistently to bear our testimonies to them before the world.

The all-wise disposer of events, at various times in the history of our religious society, has permitted that trials of the kind with which we are now exercised should befal it.

In very early days, on the first gathering and settlement of meetings in the Society, there were gainsayers and accusers, and at various times since have there arisen among us those who have caused divisions and brought

grievous accusations against their brethren. Be not dismayed, then, dear friends, as if some new thing had happened unto us, but remember that he who hath been with his people in all their trials, hath graciously promised that he will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in him; and even though it should be given us to bear perils among false brethren, yet let none of these things move us away from the hope of the gospel, or from that fervent charity which, according to apostolic testimony, suffereth long and is kind, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, beareth all things, hopeth all things.

The zeal and fidelity of Friends at different periods of our history, both in very early and more recent times, when the cause of truth which was dear to their hearts required it, have been evinced in their solemn declarations of their faith, issued not only to their own members, but in the face of the world. We believe in the ordering of Divine Providence, under our present circumstances, we are called upon again to set forth our faith; and we do therefore unequivocally declare, that the following testimonies, composed mostly of extracts from early writers in the Society, whose writings have ever been approved and sanctioned, are and ever have been our faith and belief upon the subjects referred to therein; and we do earnestly and affectionately entreat all our members to hold fast the profession thereof, without wavering.

Of the One True God and the Three that bear record in Heaven.

"The Society of Friends have uniformly declared their belief in One Only Wise, Omnipotent and Eternal Being, the Creator and Preserver of all things; infinite in all glorious attributes and perfections; the inexhaustible source of all good as well as of all happiness, and the holy object of adoration, worship and praise, from angels and from men."—[*Evans's Exposition.*]

In speaking of the Three that bear record in heaven, they have always considered it safest—finite and limited beings as we are—to confine themselves to the language of Holy Scripture, and hence have ever been scrupulous of using the word *person*, or any term of human invention, as applied to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit; but as Barclay declares, so we believe:

"There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now the saints have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that they might know the things which are freely given them of God. For the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father sends, in Christ's name, he teacheth them all things, and bringeth all things to their remembrance."—[*Barclay's Confession of Faith*, p. 104, 1673.]

"Though we have rejected the terms of *separate and distinct persons*, in the Godhead, as conveying ideas too gross to be admitted in relation to that awful and mysterious subject, we have ever believed, and as constantly maintained, the truth of that great and mysterious doctrine of 'the three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and (that) these three are one' —one God, infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible, and blessed for ever more."—[*Testimony of Friends.*]

George Fox, in a work entitled "An Answer to all such as falsely say that Quakers are no Christians," declares—

"We own the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as the Apostles have declared. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth; for there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three which bear record in earth, which we own. And now let none be offended, because we do not call

them by those unscriptural names of Trinity and Three persons, which are not Scripture words; and so do falsely say that we deny the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, which three are one, that bear record in Heaven, &c.; which three we own with all our hearts, as the Apostle John did, and as all true Christians ever did, and now do. And if you say we are not Christians, because we do not call the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Trinity, distinct and separate persons, then you may as well conclude that John was no Christian, who did not give the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, those names.

"We believe, concerning God the Father, Son and Spirit, according to the testimony of the Holy Scripture, which we receive and embrace as the most authentic and perfect declaration of Christian faith, being indited by the Holy Spirit of God, that never errs: 1st. That there is one God and Father, of whom are all things. 2ndly. That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made, who was glorified with the Father before the world began, who is God over all, blessed for ever; that there is one Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father and the Son, and leader and sanctifier, and comforter of his people. And we further believe, as the Holy Scriptures soundly and sufficiently express, that these three are one, even the Father, the Word, and the Spirit."

"The Society of Friends have declared, both by the concurrent testimony of many of its most eminent members, and in a collective capacity, their firm belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the *Saviour* of men; that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary—that he wrought miracles in the land of Judea, was hated and rejected by the chief priests and people of the Jews, betrayed by Judas, and crucified under Pontius Pilate; that he rose from the dead the third day, appeared to his disciples, and ascended to heaven, and ever liveth to make intercession for us; that he is now come in Spirit, and hath given us an understanding, being our Prophet and High Priest, and head over all things to his church—by whom also God will judge the world in righteousness, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. This we say is that Lord Jesus Christ whom we own to be our life and salvation."

The Society of Friends hold the precious fundamental doctrine of *Immediate Divine Revelation*, as expressed by Robert Barclay:

"For Jesus Christ, in and by whom the Father is revealed, doth also reveal himself to his disciples and friends in and by his Spirit. As his manifestation was outward, when he testified and witnessed for the truth in this world, and approved himself faithful throughout, so being now withdrawn, as to the outward man, he doth teach and instruct mankind inwardly by his own Spirit. He standeth at the door and knocketh, and whoso heareth his voice and openeth, he comes in to these."

"He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself:" this witness is the Holy Spirit, by which the Son of God reveals himself to the soul, gives it faith to believe in his all-powerful name, and as he is obeyed and followed, he displays his almighty power and goodness, in pardoning his past sins—delivering it out of the bondage of corruption, and translating it into the liberty of the sons of God. Thus Christ is experimentally known as the Redeemer, Saviour and Sanctifier of his people; and those only have a right to call him so, whom he thus saves from their sins by his own blessed Spirit. "Wherefore I give you to understand," saith the apostle, "that no man speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

"The nature of the New Covenant is expressed in Jeremiah, and repeated by the apostle, in these words: 'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.' The object here is God's law placed in the heart and written in the mind; from whence they become God's people, and are brought truly to know him. In this then the law is distinguished from the gospel: the law before was outward, written in tables of stone; but it is now inward, written in the heart. Of old the people depended upon their priests for the knowledge of God, but now they all have

a certain and sensible knowledge of him. How much then are they deceived, who instead of making the gospel preferable to the law, have made the condition of such as are under the gospel far worse. For no doubt it is a far better and more desirable thing to converse with God immediately, than only mediately, as being a higher and more glorious dispensation."

From the Testimony of Friends in America, we extract the following:

"We therefore profess and firmly believe, that the *light of Christ,* in the heart, is an unerring guide, and the *primary rule of faith and practice*—that it is the only medium through which we can truly and livingly attain to the knowledge of God, and the mysteries of his heavenly kingdom.

"That the influences of the Holy Spirit must be sensibly experienced, in order to be availing to us, is evident in the very nature of divine things. It is this which produces all heavenly affections and feelings on the obedient mind which opens the understanding, and gives it a right perception, and is in us an operative power, by which we are enabled to resist temptation, and walk in obedience to the law of God. By its powerful operations, we are washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, for it is 'by the Spirit of our God.' 1 Cor. 6-11. We desire to press the importance of this doctrine, and to guard it against innovations."

As regards *the Fall of Man, and the Means of Redemption,* the Society of Friends hold, that

"Man was originally created in the Divine image. 'In the image of God created he him,' 'crowned him with glory and honor,' and set him over the works of his hands. But by transgression he fell from this exalted condition; incurred the penalty of *death;* and so lost the Divine image—the wisdom, purity, and power in which he was made. This lapse of our prime ancestors not only immediately affected the actual transgressors, but remotely all their posterity. The society of Friends, in declaring their belief of the extension of the effects of Adam's fall, to all his posterity, have been careful to distinguish be-

tween those effects, as they apply to us, simply in a state of nature, or as the posterity of Adam in his fallen state; and the *guilt* or *sin* which attaches to us in consequence of our own actual transgressions.

"Though we do not ascribe any whit of Adam's guilt to men, until they make it their's by the like acts of disobedience; yet we cannot suppose that men, who are come of Adam naturally, can have any good thing in their nature, as belonging to it; which he, from whom they derive their nature, had not himself to communicate unto them. If then we may affirm that Adam did not retain in his nature (as belonging thereunto), any will or light, capable to give him knowledge in spiritual things, then neither can his posterity. For whatsoever real good any man doeth, it proceedeth not from his *nature*, as he is *man*, or the son of Adam; but from the *seed of God in him*, as a new visitation of life, in order to bring him out of his natural condition.—[*Barclay's Apology.*]

"For we affirm, that as all men partake of the fruit of *Adam's* fall, in that by reason of that evil seed, which through him is communicated unto them, they are prone and inclined unto evil, though thousands of thousands be ignorant of *Adam's* fall, neither ever knew of the eating of the forbidden fruit; so also many may come to feel the influence of this holy and divine seed and light, and be turned from evil to good by it, though they knew nothing of Christ's coming in the flesh, through whose obedience and sufferings it is purchased unto them." Ibid. Prop. V. & VI. § XV. Thus "by one man sin entered into the word, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law, sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." Rom. 5: 12, 13, 14.

"We consider then our redemption in a two fold respect or state, both which in their own nature are perfect though in their application to us, the one is not, nor can be, without respect to the other. The first is the redemption performed and accomplished by Christ for us, in his crucified body, without us; the other is the redemption wrought by Christ in us, which no less properly is called

and accounted a redemption, than the former. The first, then, is that whereby man, as he stands in the fall, is put into a capacity of salvation, and hath conveyed unto him a measure of that power, virtue, spirit, life and grace, that was in Christ Jesus; which as the free gift of God, is able to counterbalance, overcome and root out the evil seed, wherewith we are naturally as in the fall leavened. The second is that, whereby we witness and know this pure and perfect redemption *in ourselves*, purifying, cleansing us and redeeming from the power of corruption, and bringing us into unity, favor and friendship with God. By the first of these two, we that were lost in *Adam*, plunged in the bitter and corrupt seed, unable of ourselves to do any good thing, but naturally joined and united to evil, forward and propense to all iniquity; servants and slaves to the power and spirit of darkness, are notwithstanding all this so far reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, while enemies, that we are put into a capacity of salvation; having the glad tidings of the gospel of peace offered unto us, and God is reconciled unto us in Christ, calls us and invites us to himself.

"By the second, we witness this capacity brought into act, whereby receiving, and not resisting the purchase of his death, to wit: the light, spirit and grace of Christ, revealed in us, we witness and possess a real, true and inward redemption from the power and prevalency of sin, and so come to be truly and really redeemed, justified and made righteous, and to a sensible union and friendship with God. Thus *he died for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, and thus *we know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made comformable to his death.* This last follows the first in order, and is a consequence of it, proceeding from it, as an *effect* from its *cause.* So as none could have enjoyed the last, without the first had been, such being the will of God; so also can none now partake of the first, but as he witnesseth the last."

"And not only does the propitiation of our Lord Jesus Christ apply to the effects of the *fall*, and places us in a capacity of obtaining salvation, but also to the actual transgressions of men. For as all men who have come to man's estate (the man Jesus only excepted) have sinned, therefore all have need of this Saviour, to remove the wrath of God from them due to their offences; in this

respect he is truly said to have borne the iniquities of us all in his body on the tree, and therefore is the only Mediator, having qualified the wrath of God towards us, so that our former sins stand not in our way, being, by virtue of his most satisfactory sacrifice, removed and pardoned. Neither do we think that remission of sins is to be expected, sought, or obtained, any other way, or by any works or sacrifice whatsoever."—[*Barclay.*]

"For sin once committed cannot be undone; present and future obedience is no more than duty; and past offences must still remain against us without forgiveness."—[*Original and Present State of Man.*]

"But in respect to us as moral agents, we believe that though Christ died for us, that we might be brought unto glory, yet we are not actually purified, fitted for, and introduced into the kingdom, *merely* by that one offering. The way to reconciliation was opened by the death of Christ; but we are not saved by his life, till we livingly experience the work of salvation in our own particulars." Ib. 19.

And again, "We do not hereby intend any ways to lessen or derogate from the atonement and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, but on the contrary do magnify and exalt it. For as we believe all those things to have been certainly transacted which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures, concerning the birth, life, miracles, sufferings, resurrection and ascension of Christ, so we do also believe that it is the duty of every one to believe it, to whom it pleases God to reveal the same, and to bring them to the knowledge of it."—[*Barclay.*]

"For (as saith the Apostle,) the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all that they which henceforth live should not live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again."

In reference to the *Universality of Divine Light and Grace*, we believe in accordance with the testimony of Robert Barclay:

"That God, who, out of his infinite love sent his Son the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, who tasted death for every man, hath given to every man, whether Jew or

Gentile, Turk or Scythian, Indian or Barbarian, of whatsoever nation, country or place, a certain day or time of visitation, during which it is possible for him to be saved and to partake of the benefit of Christ's death. That for this end he hath communicated to every man, a measure of the light of his own Son, a measure of grace or of the Spirit, which the Scripture expresses by several names, as sometimes of the 'seed of the kingdom,' 'the light that makes all things manifest,' 'the word of God,' or 'the manifestation of the Spirit given to profit withal,' 'a talent,' 'a little leaven,' 'the gospel preached in every creature.'

"That God, in and by this light and seed, invites, calls, exhorts, and strives with every man, in order to save him; which as it is received and not resisted, works the salvation of all, even of those who are ignorant of the death and sufferings of Christ, and of Adam's fall; both by bringing them to a sense of their own misery, and to be sharers in the sufferings of Christ inwardly; and by making them partakers of his resurrection in becoming holy, pure, and righteous, and recovered out of their sins. By which also are saved they that have the knowledge of Christ outwardly, in that it opens their understandings rightly to use and apply the things delivered in the Scriptures, and to receive the saving use of them. But that this may be resisted and rejected by both; in which then, God is said to be resisted and pressed down, and Christ to be again crucified and put to open shame, in and among men: and to those who thus resist and refuse him, he becomes their condemnation."

"We do not understand this divine principle to be any part of man's nature, nor yet to be any relic of any good which Adam lost by his fall, in that we make it a distinct and separate thing from man's soul, and all the faculties of it."

The Holy Scriptures.

"Concerning the *Holy Scriptures*, we believe they were given forth by the Holy Spirit of God, through the Holy men of God, who, as the Scripture itself declares, (2 Pet. i. 21.) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. We believe they are to be read, believed and fulfilled, (He that fulfils them is Christ,) and they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for in-

struction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17,) and are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (Ib. 15.) We believe the Holy Scriptures are the words of God, for it is said in Exodus xx. 1, God spake all these words saying, &c., meaning the ten commandments given forth on Mount Sinai; and in Rev. xxii. 18, saith John, I testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man addeth unto these—and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, (not the word,) &c. So in Luke i. 20, Because thou believest not my words—and in John v. 47, and xv. 7, and xiv. 23, and xii. 47, So that we call the Holy Scriptures, as Christ, the apostles and Holy men of God called them, viz., the words of God."—[*G. Fox's Journal*, Vol. II.]

"Nevertheless, because they are only a declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Yet because they give a true and faithful testestimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty; for as by the inward testimony of the Spirit, we do alone truly know them, so they testify, That the Spirit is that Guide by which the saints are led into all truth; therefore, according to the Scriptures, the Spirit is the first and principal leader. Seeing then that we do therefore receive and believe the Scriptures, because they proceed from the Spirit, for the very same reason is the Spirit more originally and principally the rule."

"Though then we do acknowledge the Scriptures to be very heavenly and divine writings, the use of them to be very comfortable and necessary to the Church of Christ, and that we also admire and give praise to the Lord, for his wonderful providence in preserving these writings so pure and uncorrupted as we have them, through so long a night of apostacy, to be a testimony of his truth against the wickedness and abominations even of those whom he made instrumental in preserving them, so that they have

kept them to be a witness against themselves."—[*Barclay.*]

It continues to be our unshaken faith that a measure of the same divine influence under which the Holy Scriptures were given forth, is indispensably necessary to a right understanding of them. With this we believe our early Friends were eminently favored, and that their writings contain those expositions of the truths of Holy Scripture which we do most firmly believe—and it is our earnest concern to commend these writings to the frequent and attentive perusal of Friends, as containing not only the doctrines held by our religious Society, but as practically exemplifying their application in life.

Concerning Justification.

In the words of Barclay, Friends believe that

"As many as resist not the light, but receive the same, it becomes in them an holy, pure, and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all those other blessed fruits which are acceptable to God: by which holy birth, to wit, Jesus Christ formed within us, and working his works in us, as we are sanctified, so are we justified in the sight of God, according to the Apostle's words; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—1 Cor. 6: 11.

"Therefore it is not by our works wrought in our will, nor yet by good works considered as of themselves, but by Christ, who is both the *gift* and the *giver*, and the cause producing the effects in us; who, as he hath reconciled us while we were enemies, doth also in his wisdom save us and justify us after this manner, as saith the same Apostle elsewhere; according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."—Tit. 3: 5.

Justification is not to be realized but by that living faith which works by love and purifies the heart, an operative principle, the gift of God and not of ourselves—not an assent to the understanding merely to any declared truths,

but a living conviction wrought in the heart, by the operation of the Spirit of God.

From a *Confession of Faith*, by George Fox, "for the satisfaction of some tender, conscientious persons, who had heard false reports of him," we extract as follows, viz.:

"Touching the *resurrection*, it is a mystery which the carnal mind can never comprehend, but they that come to witness a part in the first resurrection, which is Christ Jesus, the Light of Life; they in his light may come to perceive the mystery of the resurrection; but if truth can be received and understood, then it will appear and be manifested to such, that I do not deny the resurrection, for I do verily believe that the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation; but to fools that say that this body of natural flesh and bones shall be raised, I say, that body which is sown, is not that body that shall be; but God giveth a body as it pleaseth him, yet to every seed its own body: now there is the seed of the Serpent, and the Seed of Christ; and they that can discern the body of each seed, are not the fools which are questioning how the dead shall be raised, and with what bodies they shall come; for they know all mankind will be found to be one of these seeds, and that every seed shall have its own body."

Baptism. — As there is one Lord, and one faith, so there is but one *baptism*, of which that administered by John was a figure. It is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." This answer of a good conscience, can only be produced by the cleansing operations of the Holy Spirit in the heart; subduing its froward nature, and bringing it into conformity to the divine will. The distinction between the baptism of John, which was with water, and that of Christ by his Spirit, is clearly marked by these expressions of John: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than

I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3: 11, 12. Here he inculcates that the baptism of Christ should winnow the soul of its chaffy or sinful nature; and operate as fire to the perfect consumption of all its defilement. Spirit baptism is not connected with water baptism, nor at all dependent upon it. The baptism of the Saviour, which is the *one* baptism, is complete in itself without exterior form or shadow. It is well known by the experience of many, that this baptism is gradually effected by the spiritual immersions of the soul. A sense of its sinful condition, with the distance it stands at from the God of perfect purity, is first given it, whereby it is brought into self-abasement, contrition, and at length, into humble resignation of all to him. Thus, it becomes baptized into the similitude of the death of Christ. Through baptism also it riseth with him into newness of life, which enableth it to bring forth the fruits of the spirit, to his praise. To them who had thus followed Christ in the regeneration, the apostle said: "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Col. 2: 10, 11, 12. True Christian baptism is a great and important work: the work of Christ himself, whereby the soul is measurably baptized into his Spirit, and adorned with its virtues. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. 3: 27. Such are, in degree, indued with his holy nature. For, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new; and all things are of God." 2 Cor. 5: 17, 18. See Phipps on Baptism.

Previously to entering upon their ministry, the apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, through which they received power to fulfil the commission given to them in these words: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, bap-

tizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Wherever the gospel is really preached, it is preached baptizingly in a greater or less degree. It was the unction of the Holy Spirit accompanying their ministry, by which the apostles were enabled to teach, *baptizing* in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and it is only through the same medium that the same effect is produced in any degree, by the ministry of the gospel at the present day.—[*Testimony of Friends.*]

Supper. — "Respecting the communion of the body and blood of Christ, we believe that it is inward and spiritual; by which the inward man is daily nourished in the hearts of those in whom Christ dwells: of which the breaking of bread by the Lord Jesus, with his disciples, was a figure; which they who had received the substance, used in the church for a time, for the sake of the weak, as they did some other outward observations. But the essential communion between Christ and his church, is only maintained by a real participation of his divine nature, through faith and obedience; and is the supper alluded to in the Revelations: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Rev. 3: 20.

Worship.—"Being fully persuaded that man without the Spirit of Christ inwardly revealed, can do nothing to the glory of God, or to effect his own salvation, we believe that its divine influence is essentially necessary to the performance of the highest act of which the human mind is capable, even the worship of Almighty God, in spirit and in truth. To experience this essential qualification, it is our duty to retire inwardly to the measure of divine grace, patiently and reverently waiting upon the Lord, for his life-giving presence, by which we shall be furnished with a sense of what we need, and enabled to offer with acceptance that offering which he requires at our hands. And whether it may please the great Head of the church to authorize any vocal communication in our assemblies or not, yet those who are thus inwardly gathered, depending upon the teachings of the Holy Spirit, and waiting for the arising of his divine life, will witness a growth in the

knowledge of the blessed truth—and be of the number of the true worshippers whom the Father seeketh to worship him; "who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Although true worship is not restricted to time or place, yet we have ever believed it to be incumbent upon us to meet often together, in order to bear a public testimony of our dependence upon the Father of all our sure mercies, and to experience the renewal of spiritual strength. We would therefore affectionately exhort all our members, not to suffer the smallness of their numbers, or the improper influence of temporal things, to discourage them from constantly attending our religious meetings, but to remember that our Lord has declared, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. 18: 20.

And we can feelingly bear our testimony to the preciousness of *silent* meetings, wherein as we are humbly concerned reverently to wait upon the Lord, He is often pleased in great mercy to draw near and to dispense to his dependent ones that bread that sustains the spiritual life, and that water that slakes the thirsty soul; and we also unequivocally declare our belief that any change in our well known ancient mode of divine worship, will tend to endanger the very existence of our religious Society.

Ministry.—"We believe that the authority and qualification for the ministry of the Gospel, is a special gift, dispensed by the Head of the church, to those whom he sanctifies, and prepares for the work, agreeably to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. "And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.' Eph. 4: 11, 12. This gift cannot be exercised, but as the ministers are actuated and moved by the Spirit of Christ; and minister under the renewed influences and openings thereof; according to the apostolic injunction; 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the

ability which God giveth; that God in all things may be glorified, through Jesus Christ.'" 1 Pet. 4: 11.

"As this gift is freely received, so it is to be freely exercised, without coveting any man's silver or gold: not for the sake of popularity, nor restrained by the slavish fear of man, but in simple and humble obedience to the will of God."

"As it is the sole prerogative of the Head of the church, to qualify and send forth such as it pleases him, without respect to sex, worldly rank or human acquirements, he has conferred the gift of the ministry on *women* as well as men; as foretold by the prophet Joel, and confirmed by the apostles of our Lord: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." Joel 2: 28.

"As by the *light* or *gift* of God all true knowledge in things spiritual is received and revealed, so by the same, as it is manifested and received in the heart, by the strength and power thereof, every true minister of the gospel is ordained, prepared, and supplied in the work of the ministry, and by the leading, moving and drawing hereof, ought every evangelist and *christian pastor* to be led and ordered in his labour and work of the gospel, both as to the place where, as to the persons to whom, and as to the time wherein he is to minister. Moreover, they who have this authority may and ought to preach the gospel, though without human commission or literature; as on the other hand, they who want the authority of this *divine gift*, however learned, or authorized by the *commission* of *men* and *churches*, are to be esteemed but as deceivers, and not true ministers of the gospel. Also they who have received this holy and unspotted gift, *as they have freely received it, so are they freely to give it.*"—[*Barclay*].

Regarding the *solemn exercise of Prayer*, we hold that

"Although we are commanded to watch and pray continually, neither of which can be done without divine help, yet we believe that the solemn duty of vocal prayer requires a special impulse; and in our addresses to the throne of Grace, it becomes us to remember that we are

but dust—that He who is 'glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders,' ought to be approached with holy fear and reverence. But we are emboldened to draw near to him in living faith, for 'the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.' And as he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the taints, according to the will of God,' we doubt not that those prayers which are put up under his divine influence, will be graciously answered."—[*Test. of Friends in America.*]

We are very sensible and it is our practical belief, that true prayer consisteth not in any form of words, but in the aspirations of the soul, mentally experienced or vocally expressed, under the immediate influence of the Spirit of Christ.

On the First Day of the Week.

"We, not seeing any ground in Scripture for it, cannot be so superstitious as to believe, that either the Jewish Sabbath now continues, or that the first day of the week is the antetype thereof, on the true Christian Sabbath; which with Calvin we believe to have a more spiritual sense: and therefore we know of no moral obligation by the fourth command, or elsewhere, to keep the first day of the week more than any other, or any holiness inherent in it. But first, forasmuch as it is necessary that there be some time set apart for the saints to meet together to wait upon God: and that secondly, it is fit at sometimes they be freed from their other outward affairs; and that thirdly, reason and equity doth allow that servants and beasts have some time allowed them to be eased from their continual labor; and that fourthly, it appears that the apostles and primitive Christians did use the first day of the week for these purposes; we find ourselves sufficiently moved for these causes to do so also, without superstitiously straining the Scriptures for another reason; which, that it is not there to be found, many Protestants, yea, Calvin himself, upon the fourth command, hath abundantly evinced. And though we therefore meet, and abstain from working upon this day, yet doth that not hinder us from having

meetings also for worship at other times."—[*Barclay's Apology.*]

Our early friends were remarkable for the plainness and simplicity of their lives and conversation, in their conscientious testimony against the vanities, maxims and customs of the world, in their clothing, the furniture of their houses, and in all their appointments in life. We desire to continue steadfast in the support of these testimonies, believing them to be among the genuine fruits of the Spirit of Christ.

The foregoing extracts from the early writers of the Society of Friends, with the remarks accompanying them, contain declarations upon most of the subjects upon which our religious Society have heretofore declared their faith, and perhaps upon all, upon which it may be necessary for us now to treat. It may be added, however, that upon all the different doctrines and testimonies as held and supported by Friends, our views accord with those that are set forth in the well known and acknowledged writings of our religious Society.

We have thus, dear Friends, seriously and candidly declared our faith upon these various points of Christian Doctrine, and we entirely disclaim, and have invariably disclaimed all views and doctrines inconsistent therewith, from whatever source they may come, or by whomsoever they may be promulgated; and we do not consider ourselves responsible for the writings of any individuals which have not received the approval of a meeting of the Society authorised to inspect and sanction writings on doctrines; nor do we countenance the receiving of any sentiments which are at variance with those contained in our approved writers.

Having thus endeavored to discharge our religious duty in this respect, we desire to cultivate the disposition to leave the event to Him, who doeth all things well, with-

out whose notice not even a sparrow falleth to the ground; and who can turn the hearts of the children of men as it pleaseth Him.

May the unslumbering Shepherd of Israel watch over and preserve us, may his Almighty arm be underneath to sustain us, and may we one and all put our dependence entirely in Him.

At our Yearly Meeting of Friends for New-England, held on Rhode-Island, from the 15th to the 23d, inclusive, of the sixth month, 1845—

The foregoing document, embracing the Doctrines of the Gospel as they ever have been, and are now most assuredly believed by the Society of Friends, was laid before us by the Committee appointed to take into solid and careful consideration, what they apprehend may be called for at our hands, under the present peculiar and trying circumstances in which we are placed; and being read, was fully united with, and adopted by the Meeting, and declared to be its Faith upon the subjects on which it treats. And the Clerk was directed to sign the same on our behalf.

From the Minutes of said Meeting,

ABRAHAM SHEARMAN, Jun., Clerk.

HANNAH GOULD, Jun., Clerk.

C 8324.307.5
Narrative of facts & circumstances
Widener Library
003201262
3 2044 081 814 121